

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

God, Man and Time

by Linus A. Mathis III

Time plays no favorites. Each day pays every man alike with 24 hours. No raises, no promotions ever! She's "equal opportunity" in every sense of the term. Yet, she is man's constant nemesis. I'm sure you've heard it said, "Time waits for no man." A cruel taskmaster time, she exacts strength from the strong, beauty from the beautiful, speed from the swift, daring from the courageous, fame from the famous, power from the powerful, prestige from the prestigious and of course, youth from the young. She's not to be bargained with, bribed or out-foxed. She will not be denied! Relentlessness and certainty are her greatest attributes. She is rarely, if ever, on our side.

Time is a finite thing, it has limitations and is measurable. The only exceptions are, of course, God and eternity. But, in the realm of the material, time may be measured and does have limitations even as space. Nonetheless, these are dizzying concepts. You see, the human mind is also finite. For instance, we find the immensity of the universe difficult to comprehend even though it is measurable. A brilliant scientist may measure the distance between Earth and a distant star in millions of light years. He or she may even speak of this great distance matter-of-factly. But when you consider how fast light travels the idea of anything being that far away is almost incomprehensible. Think of it. Light travels in a vacuum with a speed of

about 186,281 miles per second (that's per SECOND). At that speed a beam of light in a vacuum (interstellar space is considered a vacuum) would cover about 5,878,000,000,000 miles in a year. That distance is in fact the unit of length in interstellar astronomy referred to as a "light-year." Multiply the previously mentioned distance by however many millions of miles said heavenly body is from Earth and you have a distance too staggering for any human mind to truly comprehend. Yet, measurable and therefore finite nonetheless.

Consider then, how great our God is:

Isaiah 40:12-15

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven [the expanse of the universe] with the span [the distance measured in an open hand between the thumb and pinky], and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

This is figurative language as God has no hands but let me remind you that figures of speech are used for emphasis. They do not lessen the Truth, they amplify it. Our God's immensity and power are totally beyond our grasp.

Verses 13&14:

Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and

who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

Think for a moment, if you will, of the arrogance of man. Humankind continues to think itself wiser than God. Even amongst Christians this foolishness is often displayed. Listen closely to how some folks pray. They pray as though they are directing God, as if given the opportunity to run things they could do a much better job. The levels of pride which the human brain elevates itself to are preposterous. How can an organ the equivalent of 1400 cc (about three pounds in Avoirdupois) think itself so grandiose? It's ridiculous! Isn't it?

Verse 15:

Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

As you can see, even though space is measurable, the enormity of the heavens is mind boggling.

What is within the margin of our immediate vision is easily comprehensible. But as space expands around us we quickly lose cognition. So it is with our perception of time. It's challenging to consider how long 100 years is let alone eternity. Time, like space, is somewhat abstract. You can't see time or touch time. The only thing you can do with it, is measure it and decide how to spend it. Beyond that,

time is evasive. The older we get, the more slippery it becomes. Many believe that our perception of time is relative to how long we have lived. To a three year old a day is a long time. But to a 50 year old a day is hardly long enough. Certainly we all ask ourselves, "Where did the day go?" This is not a child-like postulation. The awareness of time briskly slipping away seems to accelerate as we grow older. This is only "perceived" as time is a constant. One hour in this millennia is no shorter than in any other. A day in the life of an adult is equal in length to an infant's. A day has 24 hours each comprised of 60 minutes which in turn contain 60 seconds. This is true every day and for everyone. Isn't it fascinating how differently a day may be perceived? What about God? How does the Almighty perceive time? He is the Eternal! Therefore, His perception is indeed unique to Him.

Psalms 90:4

For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

A thousand years is to God as a day. Wow! To us that would be a very long time. Wouldn't it? However, it's all in the perspective. Isn't it? After all, God is the Eternal. He always was and always will be. Now that's a concept difficult to grasp!!! But it's true nonetheless.

Deuteronomy 33:26,27

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun [upright one, a symbolic name for Israel describing her in the state God desires, i.e. the ideal Israel the beloved of God], who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*.

We, the born again ones, are the Israel of God. He is our refuge, He is the Eternal. How important then that we should live as His Jeshurun, His upright ones. When we do, He who inhabits eternity will revive our hearts.

Isaiah 57:15

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

This we owe Him especially since He has given us eternal life.

John 3:15-17

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Titus 1:2

In hope of eternal life, which

God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

I John 5:10-13

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Isn't that awesome! Eternal life is ours!!! Our greatest problem has been solved. When we confess Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead we are saved and given eternal life. How long is that? Forever and ever and that's a very long time!

God desires greatly that all men receive eternal life. He is much more passionate about this than we are. If He weren't, He wouldn't have given His only begotten Son.

John 6:38-40

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it

up again at the last day.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

I Timothy 2:3-6

For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Clearly eternal life is God's will for all men. How much He desires this is again something which escapes our comprehension.

We began this study with a consideration of time. Look how time relates to God's ardent desire for man to enjoy eternity with Him.

II Peter 3:8,9

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Earlier we looked at this self-same concept in Psalm 90:4. Most people think of this exclusively as how God views time. While it is true that time is not a handicap to the Eternal God, this verse when set in context conveys a far greater truth. The very next verse speaks of God's reliable promise and His longsuffering.

Verse 9:

The Lord is not slack [does not delay, is not slow] concerning his promise, as some men count slackness [slowness, delay]; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The above verse addresses those who scoff at the promise of the Second Coming of Christ. They judge the promise of God as they would their own words. Since they themselves are liars and promise breakers they think nothing of accusing God of the same. This they do with the intent of causing the believer to doubt the promise of Christ's Return. Let's read it:

II Peter 3:3-10

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Those who scoff and refuse to believe God's matchless word are deliberately ignorant. They refuse to heed the truths regarding the former heaven and earth and they choose not to believe the present will be destroyed. But God so wants man to be saved He is willing to wait (and has already) thousands of years so as not to miss even one. His desire is so great for man to share eternity with Him that a thousand years seems like a day. He is not willing that any should perish which is why He will wait so long. Think how long He waited for a woman such as Mary! Thousands of years! That's a long time even for God but His love for man is what sustains His longsuffering. His love is what motivates Him to wait and wait and wait. How unlike us. When we desire something from Him we want it now. We expect a morning prayer to be answered by noon. If it isn't we are depressed. Our youthful lust must seem foolish to Him, yet He loves us anyway. As for those that scoff?

Well, the day of the Lord is a time that will be ushered in unannounced. When it is, this old planet and the heavens in which it is set will be in store for a drastic change. What a time that will be!

Time marches on and we sure don't want to be like this fellow:

Luke 12:15-21

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

But God said unto him, *Thou fool*, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Let's make up our minds to be rich towards God even if it means being poor by worldly standards. This is

something we should ask Him to help us with. We should do it while there is yet time. Who among us can say with certainty this day is not our last? No man knows what tomorrow may bring or if for him there will even be a tomorrow. Consider the following wisdom:

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Let me say that another way!

Colossians 3:23,24

And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

We may not fully comprehend the essence of time now but there's a day coming when we most assuredly will.

I Corinthians 13:9-12

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect (Jesus Christ at his Return) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I

know even as also I am known.

Speaking of days, what a day that will be! What wonderful days shall follow!!!

Revelation 20:1-6

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Now there's a millennium you will not want to miss. Even though we only understand in part and time tends to prevaricate us, this certainly helps put some comprehension on eternity. Doesn't it? I for one think so. Furthermore, I am most blessed to know that the Eternal God has eternity well in hand.

Psalms 31:14-16
But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my God.

My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.

Time may wait for no man but eternity awaits the children of God!

NOTES